

Feb 3 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to share my support of DBRS (Deaf Blind Relay Service). My name is Mark Landreneau and I am both Deaf and legally blind. I have Usher Syndrome, a combination of Deafness and Retinitis Pigmentosa, a degenerative eye condition wherein I am losing my periphery vision gradually to a small tunnel which leads to eventual blindness.

One of the most exciting technological advances for Deaf people has been the advent of the Video Relay Service (VRS). Finally Deaf people are able to access the telecommunications arena on par with hearing counterparts. The one exception to this being those Deaf individuals who are also fully blind or who's visual impairment renders them unable to see the interpreter on their monitor. For those people a Communication Facilitator, a sighted person who is fluent in American Sign Language is in the same room as the Deafblind person and can copy what the interpreter is saying on the screen into the Deafblind person's hands. This is a way of working around the barrier. Currently Seattle's Deaf Blind Service Center offers this service to their client base on a small scale. It works and for people like myself who will gradually be in this situation given my degenerative eye condition, I want to know that there is something I can fall back on.

I

love using VRS and strongly urge you to support DBRS. Access to telecommunications is for all citizens of this country including Deafblind people.

Sincerely

Mark Landreneau  
4021 38<sup>th</sup> Ave SW  
Seattle WA 98126 2430  
Email